

Liberal, Imperial, and Economic Motivation of U.S. Foreign Policy in the Philippines 1898-1946

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Introduction

At the end of the nineteenth century, the United States found itself in a peculiar position. Defining itself as a nation of liberty, still recovering from a destructive civil war to cement its unity and equality, and proud of its long policy history of trade instead of arms as its method of international relations, the country suddenly found itself militarily subduing an empire spanning half the globe. This was not so much an empire of conquest as it was one of convenience or perhaps, as it was seen then, serendipity. Once gained, however, the United States immediately began to struggle with how to manage this empire and what to eventually do with it. This paper will deal with this struggle as it pertains to U.S. policy toward the Philippine islands. Specifically, I will focus upon the initial formation of U.S. policy toward its Philippine possession and how that policy evolved and was interpreted by various presidents and legislatures until ultimate independence was granted in 1946. As the United States today continues to be involved in the possession and (re)construction of countries, the insights into the political and economic tides that swayed U.S. policy toward the Philippines are useful in understanding the forces that affect U.S. policy in other international interventions today.

Within the period of U.S. possession I will attempt to draw out three basic camps motivating various policy interpretations. The first is the independence camp, or those who fought for the United States to grant Philippine independence either immediately, or with a defined date. The opposing camp contained those dedicated to the long delay if not elimination of the idea of Philippine independence in favor of U.S. continued dominance. The third position is that of economic interest which was strictly in favor of policy benefiting the United States economically regardless of the question of independence. What I will show is that all of these camps co-existed throughout the 50 year discussion of how to deal with the Philippines, and that their relative strength, and thus influence on the interpretation of U.S. policy had very little to do with the state of the Philippines themselves, but were directly tied to international events and their impact on U.S. domestic politics.

The story of how the United States, with no established policy of imperial expansion, came to find itself in possession of the Philippines provides a good picture of a country struggling to identify its place in the world. The U.S. seizure of the Philippines ultimately had less to do with U.S. interests in Asia and more to do with interests in the Caribbean. Agricultural interest in Cuba predated the Civil War when southern Democrats began to suggest acquiring the Spanish possession of Cuba to increase available slave territory.^[1] That is not to say that the United States had no interests in Asia. Clearly the United States' opening of Japan to trade, establishing trade with China under the treaty port system, and nearly coming to open conflict with Britain and Germany over

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possession of the Samoan islands made clear its interests afar as well as closer to home.^[2] The 19th century was defined as a period of great expansion and though the essay Manifest Destiny was not published until 1885 the rapid expansion of the frontier to the Pacific Ocean and then beyond to Hawaii and other Pacific Islands showed the idea was fundamental to American character.^[3] In this era the idea of America possessing superior racial, moral, and political qualities seemed to demand that if the world was to be carved up into empires, the United States had a right, and almost an obligation, to participate.^[4] Although the Monroe doctrine, established in 1823, was intended to prevent previous Spanish colonies in the Americas from being re-colonized by other European powers, it was no great leap of the imagination to see all of these former European colonies now as American protectorates and so not very far from an empire.^[5]

Thus when U.S. agricultural interests in Spanish Cuba began to be threatened by Spain's brutal suppression of a prolonged Cuban independence movement, it was clearly consistent with American regional and economic interests to intervene. America notified Spain that if it could not create peaceful conditions for U.S. business in Cuba, America would.^[6] This willingness to become involved also stemmed from the growing American public support to aid an independence movement seeking to throw off the bonds of tyranny as had been done farther North in 1776.^[7] This mix of idealistic fervor and realist calculation would continue on to color the U.S. vision of Philippine retention after the Spanish-American War.

April 24, 1898 the United States declared war on Spain but along with the declaration of war, Congress had approved the Teller resolution that specified Cuba was to be liberated and given independence, not annexed to the United States.^[8] This amendment had been added specifically by anti-imperialistic Democratic Congressmen in response to overwhelming public opinion supporting Cuba libre, or a free Cuba, but it ran counter to prevailing American policy regarding Cuba which had always considered it a desirable territory for both business and national defense.^[9] Regardless of the intent of the amendment, which the Congress and President McKinley were forced to approve to appease public demands, the McKinley administration proceeded to deconstruct the document and latch onto the requirement for "pacification" before independence upon which to justify continued U.S. possession of the island. Pacification was re-interpreted as stable government, which was argued could take generations.^[10] Even the later Platt amendment which in name gave independence to Cuba, in reality reflected more U.S. business and security interests by retaining sovereignty over matters of Cuban defense and economics.^[11] This was the beginning of a period where U.S. imperialist interests prevailed. With the Philippines we see a similar story and similar outcome.

Anticipating a possible war with Spain, the War Department had created orders directing Commodore Dewey to destroy the Spanish fleet anchored in Manila at the onset of hostilities to prevent these ships from being brought into the conflict in Cuba.^[12] The additional advantage of sinking the Spanish fleet in Manila was to deprive Spain of income from the colony and to hold Manila as a bargaining chip in peace negotiations should it be needed.^[13] Unable to annex Cuba as a spoil of war, however, the Philippines began to be seen as a desired prize and one that the United States almost had no choice in keeping. Once the United States had possession of the Philippines at the end of the war, it had three options. It could return the colony to Spain which would be seen as humiliating to the United States having just fought against Spanish tyranny. It could immediately grant independence to the Philippines, but similar to Cuba, after hundreds of years of Spanish colonial oppression it was in no position to withstand the imperial designs of other colonial powers seeking territory in Asia such as Germany and Japan.^[14] Finally the United States could maintain possession of Philippine sovereignty while tutoring the country in government until it could stand on its own.^[15] Again we see the same argument that stemmed from the idea of "pacification" in Cuba being used to provide a moral obligation to bring enlightenment and the stability of democratic ideals and government. The argument over whether or not to keep the Philippines contained all the interests that would continue to influence U.S. policy in the islands until their independence.

In the Congressional debate over approval of the Treaty of Paris ending the Spanish-American war and the debate immediately after to clarify U.S. policy towards the Philippines after sovereignty had passed to the United States, domestic politics played a large part. Democrats, eager for a position from which they might politically defeat the Republican majority soon lined up behind immediate Philippine independence holding aloft the Declaration of Independence and asking whether or not Republicans knew about its provisions. Republicans touted the economic advantage of creating an exclusive market for U.S. products which was presented as the solution to the economic depression of the early 1890s.[16] Additionally, and perhaps most effectively, Republicans took the moral high ground declaring it America's responsibility, now that it found itself in possession of the Philippines, to bring stability and democracy before possibly considering independence.[17] Finally, in a feat of self-serving politics, Democratic Congressman William Jennings Bryant led a defection and approved the Paris treaty in order to end the war with Spain and to separate the issue of Philippine independence for his later use against the Republicans in his presidential campaign platform.[18] Thus sovereignty over the Philippines passed from Spain to the United States. But the question remained, what would be the eventual destiny of the Philippines? Would they become a state of the union, a member of an American commonwealth, or an independent state?

Soon after treaty ratification, the passing of the McEnery resolution with the Bacon amendment would have established U.S. policy toward the Philippines similar to that of its policy toward Cuba, full independence. Its defeat in the House left open continued possession and possible commonwealth status, but racial, geostrategic, and economic factors made statehood very unlikely for the Philippines. Annexation of the Philippine islands would have made it our largest and most populous state, added ten percent to the total population of the United States, and created an enormous ethnic minority offensive to current Darwinian ideas about European racial superiority.[19] Though McKinley utilized racial superiority in declaring American responsibility to uplift the lesser Filipinos, both sides of the aisle understood that this argument would only accomplish preventing early independence.[20] Granting citizenship, besides adding an enormous ethnic minority to the U.S. population, would dump millions of unskilled laborers into the U.S. workforce as well as inexpensive products from that labor. U.S. business therefore opposed annexation of the Philippines, yet at the same time desired access to both its market for the sale of excess U.S. production and its resources including agricultural land and minerals. Finally it was recognized that possession of the Philippines would commit the United States to its defense and inevitable conflicts extraneous to current U.S. commitments.[21]

Forces against annexation of the Philippines came from all sides, but did not translate into overwhelming desire to rid the United States of the possession. They did however motivate the first Congressional legislation to show the intent of the Congress in Philippine affairs. The Foraker amendment to the Army appropriations bill of 1899 made clear that while the United States occupied the Philippines they should not be exploited in the manner of European colonial precedent.[22] The bottom line, however, was that the United States retained sovereignty over the Philippines, and policy toward its ultimate disposition could always change. For Republicans and McKinley that was enough for now.

U.S. presidential elections in 1900 between McKinley and Bryan saw independence of the Philippines as a major issue with Republicans taking both an idealistic "high road" as well as an economic trade interest dominated "low road" in arguing for continuing sovereignty over the Philippines.[23] Bryan's tactic of approving the Treaty of Paris in order to utilize a platform of Philippine independence to win the greater prize of the presidency backfired. With McKinley's victory came a mandate for retention of the Philippines and the continuation of efforts to make this retention permanent.[24]

On September 1st, 1900 with the effective end of the rebellion in the Philippines, implementation of U.S. governance of the islands passed from the U.S. military government to McKinley's appointee William Howard Taft as the first governor general.[25] Though appointed by McKinley

he would continue to receive support from Roosevelt after the elections of 1901. Initially against retention of the Philippines, Taft soon changed his mind and set out with a determined single-mindedness to implement plans that would help ensure a prolonged U.S. possession. Taft would dominate U.S.-Philippine policy for the next 13 years, first as governor general, then head of the War Department, and finally as U.S. president. Taft set about creating local government in the Philippines with the intent of eventual self government, but he also pushed for economic and trade policies that would tie the United States and Philippines closer together. With one hand he established local Filipino government by co-opting local social elites which reduced motivation for the remaining insurgency and brought a larger measure of stability, with the other he pushed for conditions favorable to massive U.S. investment in the Philippines in order to gain business interests favorable to retention. Stable government and profitable trade, it was thought, would undermine the argument for Philippine independence and turn opinion favorably toward retention.[\[26\]](#)

The local government was drawn from the newly created Partido Federalista. This was a group of educated pro-U.S. elites with little public base of support who saw their interests best served by a continued U.S. presence. This along with the sedition law, which criminalized the promotion of Philippine independence until after the final suppression of the insurrection, gave a picture much like other European colonies, one which creates stability but for the purposes of the imperial power not the people of the colony.[\[27\]](#) As H.W. Brands put it:

Yet even in the case of the ilustrados (Filipino educated elite), and as a general principle, the United States ran the Philippines in the interests of Americans, specifically Americans informed and energetic enough to seize the appropriate levers of power in Washington. Any connection between these interests and those of the Filipino people at large—or, for that matter, of the American people at large—was basically coincidental.[\[28\]](#)

In order to create the conditions necessary for substantial U.S. investment in the Philippines, Taft set about eliminating trade tariffs between the two countries. When the Supreme Court ruled in 1901 that insular governments did not fall within the tariff wall but could be given special schedules, Taft set out for Washington to personally lobby. Ideally he wanted free trade, but a reduction of 50 to 75% would give Philippine products the competitive edge in the United States to inspire business investment in the Philippines. Although Republicans still held the majority in Congress, they were also the party of protectionism who had put the large tariff barriers in place to protect U.S. industry. Thus the Republicans found a conflict between their intent in the Philippines to prevent independence, and their commitment to business interests. In trying to convince them Taft explicitly explained that free trade would create a preferential trading system that would attract investment and make the Philippines reluctant to remove itself from this privileged trade by becoming independent. Roosevelt signed into law a 25% tariff reduction for the Philippines in 1902, far less than Taft had desired.[\[29\]](#) Tariff reduction, however would be an issue that Taft would return to in his later offices.

Perhaps the most critical piece of legislation approved by Congress to prevent the exploitation of the Philippines and create conditions favorable to future independence was the Organic Act passed in 1902. Though it took four congressional sessions of bitter partisanship fighting to conclude, the act contained three cornerstone restrictions on Philippine exploitation. The first restricted foreign land holdings by a corporation to only 2500 acres in order to prevent massive plantation development. The second gave specific restrictions on mining claims limiting them to one per individual or corporation, and to a size of one thousand square feet. In both the land and mining restrictions having a holding prohibited an individual or corporation from having any other agricultural or mining interest at the same time. The final major effect of the act was to refuse the extension of the U.S. banking system to the Philippines which would have provided direct access to U.S. capital.[\[30\]](#) These restrictions, consistent with Republican protectionism, gave Taft, Roosevelt, and anti-independence leaders who followed a conflict between desires and available actions. The attempt to circumvent these restrictions would eventually help to change the party in

power and with it the course of U.S. policy in the Philippines. Before that, however, U.S. security policy with respect to the Philippines came to the forefront near the end of Roosevelt's first term.

The beginning of the Russo-Japanese war in 1904 brought back to the forefront concerns over the security of the Philippines, and U.S. obligations. The U.S. battle fleet was currently stationed in the Atlantic, and the Japanese crushing victory over the Russians in Tsushima highlighted the inadvisability of splitting a battle fleet between oceans.^[31] Previous security concerns had only involved Germany who had taken possession of multiple islands along steaming routes to the Philippines, but the land and sea victories of Japan over Russia starkly highlighted the woeful Philippine defense against such an adversary.^[32] With Congress unwilling to substantially fund military bases or a fleet to defend the islands, Roosevelt began to have grave misgivings over the future retention of the Philippines. So serious were his doubts about the ability of the United States to defend it, he made an agreement with the Japanese government recognizing the legitimacy of Japan's interests in Korea in exchange for non-interference in the Philippines.^[33] With U.S. security policy eventually to settle on defense of the Philippines from forces stationed in Hawaii, Roosevelt seriously considers granting independence in 1908 to eliminate this lingering vulnerability.^[34] Roosevelt's successor, however, was not quite so ready to part with his dream of empire.

After William Taft was elected president in 1908 he set about tariff revision for the Philippines which had eluded him as governor general and head of the War Department. Roosevelt had failed to push through Philippine tariff reform in each of the last four years of his administration as American sugar beet and tobacco interests fought to keep tariff protection against Philippine products.^[35] Taft not only pushed through a tariff reform package, but in 1909 established a mostly reciprocal free trade agreement between the United States and Philippines. He did this, however, against the desires of the Philippine congress.^[36] At this point the elected officials in the Philippines had developed from their initial pro-U.S. position to one that demanded independence even if the timeline was uncertain due to the developmental needs of the islands. These leaders, including one who would become the voice of Philippine politics until independence, Manuel Quezon, strongly objected to this free trade agreement. Quezon recognized that free trade with the United States would inhibit Philippine industry by flooding the market with U.S. products while at the same time inspire massive U.S. investment in the Philippines to take advantage of its land and cheap labor. These two together would inexorably create a Philippine dependency upon the United States that would deny its independence.^[37] What the Philippines continued to search and lobby for, were preferential tariffs favoring Philippine development, not free trade or equal tariffs.^[38] Taft approved the measure over the objections of the Philippine congress and moved on to the second requirement necessary to invite U.S. capital, large land holdings.

A legacy of the dominance of the Catholic Church in Philippine affairs under Spanish colonial rule was the ownership of large tracks of undeveloped land by the church itself. In order to eliminate the power of the church on the islands and promote agricultural development and land ownership, Taft purchased this land from the Vatican in 1903 and set up a system to sell plots to Filipinos.^[39] Although congress had specifically called for the same restrictions on sale of these lands to foreign investors as they had on other agricultural lands, Taft utilized a favorable U.S. attorney general reinterpretation in 1909 to approve the sale of 50,000 acres to the American Sugar Refining Company, who likely sponsored the attorney general's decision.^[40] Clearly Taft had to see this as the culmination of his plans to prevent the independence of the islands. Philippine officials quickly condemned the sale regarding it as exploitation, as did the U.S. Congress whose Democrats utilized this event as well as the practice of U.S. insular government employees using their position to advantageously purchase land and mineral rights, to reinvigorate the independence camp and help bring about a crushing defeat for Republicans in the 1911 House elections.^[41] Taft's 13 year struggle to establish conditions favoring a retention policy toward the Philippines would largely come to an end the next year as Woodrow Wilson's victory for the presidency would bring about Democratic domination in the government until 1921.

Wilson and his appointed governor general Francis Burton Harrison would proceed to undo most of the Taft era policies and reset the Philippines on course toward independence. Much of the determination to do so, however, stemmed not from idealistic anti-colonial sentiment, but from a practical recommendation from Wilson's close associate Henry Jones Ford who toured the Philippines in 1912 and concluded that Wilson's choices were between revolt or further political autonomy and eventual independence.[42] With Wilson's direction, Harrison set about a complete overhaul of the Philippine insular government in 1913 including the creation of an upper house of congress, and the "Filipinization" of government positions which had continued to be overwhelmingly held by Americans.[43] This was a complete reversal in policy implementation as Taft had worked to concentrate power in the hands of the U.S. governor general and prevent authority from transferring to the Philippine assembly or Filipinos in general.[44] Unfortunately, the insular government at the time of Harrison's changes, continued to be made up of Filipino elites from various regions of the country. Though policies originating as far back as Taft's first term as governor general had attempted to build impersonal democratic institutions, Filipino culture remained, as it always had been, devoted to personal "kinship networks." [45] As power transferred more and more to the new two house insular congress, these elites became entrenched in government in effect creating a type of oligarchic control of Philippine politics concerned more with preservation of their own power than with the interests of the islands.[46] This would later lead to the widely publicized corruption and failure of the Philippine Bank as well as an associated currency crisis following World War One. Harrison accepted these failures as normal parts of new democracy and compared them to similar problems during the Grant administration but they would extract a political price.[47] The First World War also inspired further clarification of U.S. policy in the Philippines by the U.S. Congress.

The beginning of WWI renewed concern over the vulnerability of the United States in the Philippines bringing voices from both sides of the aisle in Congress to call for immediate withdrawal from the Philippines and cutting of all ties.[48] Though these were extreme views, the war did allow the opportunity to begin debate on a bill introduced by House Democrat William Jones, head of the committee on insular affairs. The Jones measure would finally put in writing the policy of the U.S. government toward the Philippines as that of eventual granting of independence. The bill would remain in debate until 1916 but even though it established no timetable for independence, like the Teller amendment, it finally established a U.S. declaration of intent.[49] The Philippine insular government approved of the measure largely because it appeased their constituencies who demanded independence while allowing them opportunity to delay independence and preserve their trade privilege under U.S. sovereignty.[50]

The war itself was beneficial to the islands. Massive war demand fueled large income surpluses which the government used to invest in heavy industry including cement, coal, and steel.[51] Unfortunately this focus on national industrial development came with large amounts of corruption and at the expense of smaller local government improvements which would have had a more lasting effect.[52]

Following the war, the ensuing failure of the Philippine national bank, related currency crisis forcing peso devaluation, and recognition of the high level of government corruption discredited Harrison's handling of the Philippines and put in question the readiness of Filipinos for self government.[53] Together with the failure of the U.S. Congress to approve the Treaty of Versailles or the League of Nations, Democrats in general lost credibility and were replaced by a Republicans majority in both houses in 1918 and the election of President Harding in 1921.

Though Republicans were not willing to attempt a repeal of the Jones Act, the open ended Jones law allowed a return to Taft era policies. In order to show necessity for these policies, Harding dispatched a commission headed by the former governor general under Taft to determine the readiness of the Philippines for self government and independence. Unsurprisingly this report, delivered in 1921, found the islands far from prepared for self rule.[54] Leonard Wood, the second member of Harding's team investigating the Philippines, was rewarded with the general

governorship. Republican Taft-era policies to attract U.S. capital to the Philippines would continue through the Coolidge years and well into the Hoover administration despite continued U.S. congressional pressure for independence or a scheduled plebiscite.^[55] It would take another external event to turn U.S. policy back toward near term independence.

The Wall Street crash of 1929 motivated Congress to enact the Smoot-Hawley Act. This legislation raised protective tariffs and initiated a world trade war which would eventually aggravate an economic downturn into the Great Depression of the 1930s. As the economy worsened, protectionist interests turned their eye on the Philippines. Business lined up on both sides of the debate. Industry that used sugar pressed for retention of the Philippines to keep prices down while U.S. sugar producers demanded immediate independence in order to place the Philippines behind the tariff wall and help lift sugar prices.^[56] Those opposed to independence were not so naïve as to promote forced retention, but instead pushed the idea of a Philippine plebiscite at the end of an extended period of commonwealth in order to give the Philippine citizens the ability to vote on their future. While this seemed wholesomely democratic, the underlying premise of this policy was to use the intervening years to create a condition of dependency after which the Filipino citizens would have no choice but to vote for continued commonwealth. Those truly pushing for independence reversed the order demanding that if a plebiscite were to occur it should be at the beginning of a transition period leading to full independence.^[57]

Various bills were introduced and debated in Congress until finally in 1932 the Hare-Hawes-Cutting Act was passed providing for a 10 year commonwealth transition period before full independence. The act was passed even over Hoover's presidential veto largely due to continued recognition of its strategic vulnerability to Japan, growing depression era racist violence toward foreign labor, and business pressure to push the Philippines behind the tariff wall.^[58] All that was left was for the Filipino insular government, who had built their public support on the fight for independence, to approve the act for it to go into effect. Unfortunately, local Filipino politics between Quezon and his rival Sergio Osmeña led to its ultimate rejection largely in order to push for more favorable trade conditions for the Philippines during the transition.^[59] At this point it was the United States which was searching for a way to earn independence from the Philippines.^[60]

Since Quezon had led the defeat of the Hare-Hawes-Cutting legislation largely due to the fact that his rival had been the one to create the deal in Washington, Quezon traveled to the United States to work a better deal and restore his political capitol which had lost a great deal of value during his perceived fight against the independence act. However with the election of Franklin Roosevelt, Quezon's mission to seek a better treaty had the advantage of a Democratic president and majorities in both houses. The result was the Tydings-McDuffie Act, approved in 1934, with the only major change being the elimination of U.S. military bases and negotiations on maintaining naval bases to occur after independence.^[61] With this bill U.S. interpretation of its destiny with the Philippines had been decided. The United States would not remember itself as an imperial power focused upon the exploitation of its possessions, but would see in its history with the Philippines a great power who sought to lift up and democratize an oppressed colony of Spain. The decision to finally grant independence had great consequences for the Philippines even before independence was finally observed.

The struggle to pass Philippine independence legislation had brought together a vast array of interests including idealistic anti-imperialists, protectionist business leaders, and defense experts. Once the decision for independence was finally made, regardless of the period of commonwealth, the United States largely washed its hands from intervening in Philippine matters. Democracy in the commonwealth government was slowly compromised by the personality of Quezon and the increased separation between the government elites and the citizens facilitated by coconut oil revenues. These millions of dollars delivered by the United States in response to Quezon's promise to use the funds to help transition to independence instead facilitated reduction in personal income taxes and thus reduction of government accountability while at the same time

cementing public support for Quezon.[62] The growing centralization of power in Quezon's commonwealth presidency did not go unnoticed in Washington, but there was simply no political will to intervene.[63] Likewise when it became apparent that the windfall millions of dollars accrued to the commonwealth government from coconut oil taxes were not used, as promised, to prepare the country for tariff preference elimination, Washington took no action other than official protest.[64] Likewise the United States had largely written off defense of the Philippines in case of Japanese invasion in its refusal to fund base construction in Guam, instead preferring to station forces in Hawaii.[65] The United States had one more chance to intervene in Philippine affairs immediately following World War Two but again, preferred not to intervene allowing the independence timeline to run its course.

With the return of U.S. forces to the Philippines following Japanese occupation the problem of how to handle reconstruction and members of government who had collaborated with the Japanese were paramount. To be truly effective at rebuilding the country and removing collaborators from government the United States would have had to intervene directly thus re-asserting its sovereignty over the territory to not only repair damaged infrastructure, but repair the damaged democratic government by prosecution of collaborators and reducing the power of the executive.[66] Though Roosevelt directed the removal of collaborators from political or economic office, he left the implementation to the commonwealth government which was wholly unable to do so while trying to recover from the war.[67] Manila, as Karnow points out, "after Warsaw, was the most destroyed allied city of World War II." [68] It has also been proposed that MacArthur, while still maintaining military control over the country, could have used his authority to break up the oligarchic government establishment while at the same time dealing with collaborators.[69] Most likely he would have not had enough political flexibility, even in war, to accomplish these goals. Despite its doubts with the democratic institutions and involvement of wartime collaborators, the United States preferred to maintain its policy and timeline for independence which found Osmeña becoming the first president of the country of the Philippines on 4 January 1946.

Until nearly the end of fifty years of Philippine possession, the United States was not able to effectively implement a coherent policy toward the islands in a way that advanced U.S. goals. Alongside proponents of imperial policy looking to extract wealth and resources from the Philippines stood those grounded in the belief that the Philippines represented a strategic vulnerability and threatened U.S. business and labor. This latter group had originally been characterized as believing that the United States had saved the Filipinos from oppression and had a moral responsibility to protect and provide instruction to the islands only until they were able to stand on their own. With hindsight this was mostly political rhetoric better used by those favoring retention, to mobilize public opinion for domestic politics. U.S. policy in the Philippines was never truly founded on anything other than perceived national interests. Economic interests, it seems, belonged to both camps with those who would have exploited Filipino resources on one side and U.S. business and labor who would have had to compete with Filipino products and immigrant labor on the other. What is clear from the examination of the development of U.S. policy toward the Philippines is that in large part the United States simply had no powerful motivation for maintaining a colonial interest, and as such that events in the islands themselves did not directly impact changes in U.S. politics but were destined to ride the waves of other larger influences such as war and economic depression.[70]

The "in-between" policy slowly walked by the United States ensured that no benefit of possession of the Philippines would occur, but likely there were no benefits to be had. Had the United States chosen to pursue full European imperial style policy toward the Philippines, there is no doubt that the United States could have taken advantage of the rich resources of the islands. Military suppression of rebellion and administrative costs of doing so, however, would have likely balanced the ledger, or worse, as seen in some European colonial experiences of the era. Had the United States wholeheartedly chosen independence early with a longer term outlook in forming a stable independent trading and security partner such as U.S. policy in Japan and

Germany perhaps a mutually beneficial long term relationship could have been formed. But in the period of isolationist thought the short term expense would have been politically prohibitive. Congress had refused funding to defend the Philippines as a U.S. possession and assuredly would have done so as an independent state. In addition, building democracy within a culture foreign to its principles and history is a far riskier endeavor than rebuilding a nation previously founded upon them. In the end the United States took advantage of an opportunity for empire but found within it the satisfaction of no lasting national interest.

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33. *Ibid.*, 107.
34. *Ibid.*, 119.
35. *Ibid.*, 126.
36. Brands, *Op. Cit.*, 96.
37. *Ibid.*
38. Golay, *Op. Cit.*, 130.
39. Brands, *Op. Cit.*, 99.
40. *Ibid.*, 100.
41. *Ibid.*, 102.

42. Stanley Karnow, *In Our Image: America's Empire in the Philippines* (New York: Random House, 1989), 243.
43. Brands, Op. Cit., 109.
44. Golay, Op. Cit., 160.
45. Karnow, Op. Cit., 228.
46. Smith, Op. Cit., 55.
47. Brands, Op. Cit., 112.
48. Golay, Op. Cit., 184.
49. Brands, Op. Cit., 116.
50. Ibid.
51. Golay, Op. Cit., 214.
52. Golay, Ibid., 216. Brands, Op. Cit., 118.
53. Golay, Ibid., 217.
54. Brands, Op. Cit., 119-121.
55. Brands, Ibid., 134; Golay, Op. Cit., 252.
56. Golay, Ibid., 280.
57. Ibid., 316.
58. Brands, Op. Cit., 149.
59. Ibid., 154.
60. Ibid., 149.
61. Golay, Op. Cit., 326-327.
62. Ibid., 366.
63. Brands, Op. Cit., 153.
64. Golay, Op. Cit., 361.
65. Brands, Op. Cit., 178.
66. Ibid., 214.

67. Golay, Op. Cit., 440.

68. Karnow, Op. Cit., 240-241 (photo caption).

69. Smith, Op. Cit., 57.

70. Vince Boudreau, "Methods of Domination and Modes of Resistance: The U.S. Colonial State and Philippine Mobilization in Comparative Perspective" in *The American Colonial State in the Philippines: Global Perspectives*, Julian Go and Anne L. Foster, eds. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 265.